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Albania E61

To the Land of the Eagle

361 shop-keepers, and children. The children have an ideal
857 existence—from the child's point of view. Down the centre of every street runs a little trickling stream of water in which they can play and mess about to their hearts' content, and there are no nurses to reprove them for making themselves wet or scold them for dirtying their clothes.

856 In Podgradetz, as elsewhere in Albania, the children are often quite pretty. Their good looks, however, seldom last to maturity—at least the good looks of the girls, who deteriorate so rapidly in appearance after about the age of sixteen that they seem to skip a whole period and become old women immediately.

○○○ While I was in Podgradetz I made the acquaintance of the schoolmaster and the doctor. The schoolmaster invited me into the school where he was giving the third and fourth classes—girls—an arithmetic lesson. Without any trace of shyness the children came out from the class one by one and did sums on the blackboard. They seemed bright and intelligent, and I was not surprised when the teacher told me that he had found the girls more intelligent and quicker than the boys.

The doctor, who also ran the chemist's shop, as is customary in these parts, was a cheery little man bursting with local patriotism. To use an Americanism, " he boosted his home town some ". He praised the water, the air, the scenery. He took me up a hill in rear of the town and showed me the view. " Is there anywhere in the world a finer prospect than this ? " he demanded. The local wine,